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OUTCOME OF THE CONFERENCE: DRAFT STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES AND COMMITMENTS AND GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION

A. Introduction (paras. 36-42)

(Section IV (Global Plan of Action: Strategies for implementation) of the draft Habitat agenda)

Text submitted by Working Group II on the basis of negotiations held on document A/CONF.165/PC.3/4

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36. Twenty years ago in Vancouver, at the First United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat I), the world community adopted an agenda for human settlements development. Since then, there have been remarkable changes in population and social, political, environmental and economic circumstances that affect the strategic outlook. These changes have led many Governments to adopt and promote enabling policies to facilitate actions by individuals, families, communities and the private sector to improve human settlements conditions. However, it is estimated that at least 1 billion human beings still lack adequate shelter and are living in unacceptable conditions of poverty, mostly in developing countries.

37. While the rate of population growth is on the decline, during the past 20 years world population has increased from about 4.2 billion to about 5.7 billion, with nearly one third under 15 years of age, and an increasing number of people living in cities. By the turn of the century, humankind will be crossing a threshold where over 50 per cent of the population live in urban areas. Meeting the needs of the nearly 2 billion more people expected in the coming two decades and managing human settlements towards sustainability will be a daunting task. In developing countries, in particular, rapid urbanization and the growth of towns and cities, where public and private resources tend to concentrate, represent new challenges and at the same time new opportunities: there is a need to address the root causes of these phenomena, including rural to urban migration.

38. [Text to be further negotiated]

39. While Habitat II is a Conference of States and there are many things national Governments can do to enable local communities to solve problems, the actors who will determine success or failure in improving the human settlements condition are mostly found at the community level in both the public and private sectors. It is they, local authorities and other stakeholders, who are on the front line in achieving the goals of Habitat II. Although the structural causes of the problems have often to be dealt with at the national and sometimes the international level, progress will depend to a large degree on local authorities, civic engagement and the forging of partnerships at all levels of government with the private sector, the cooperative sector, non-governmental and community-based organizations, workers and employers and civil society at large.

40. Habitat II is one in an extraordinary series of world conferences held under the auspices of the United Nations over the past five years. All addressed important issues of people-centred sustainable development, including sustained economic growth and equity, for which successful implementation requires action at all levels, particularly at the local level. Strategies on social, economic, environmental, disaster reduction, population, disability and gender issues will have to be implemented in urban and rural areas and, in particular, where the problems are acute and generate tension.

41. In Habitat II, Governments at all levels, the community and the private sector considered how the achievement of the two principal goals of "Adequate shelter for all" and "Sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world" can be furthered at the local level through an enabling process in which individuals, families and their communities play a central role. This is what

is special about the Habitat II Global Plan of Action and its strategies for implementation. Implementation of these measures will need to be adapted to the specific situation of each country and community.

42. The strategy of the Global Plan of Action is based on enablement and participation. Under this strategy, government efforts are based on establishing legislative, institutional and financial frameworks that will enable the private sector, non-governmental organizations and community groups to fully contribute to [sustainable development, including sustained growth] and enable all women and men to work with each other and in their communities with Governments at all levels, to determine collectively their future, decide on priorities for action, identify and allocate resources fairly and build partnerships to achieve common goals. Enablement creates:

(a) A situation in which the full potential and resources of all actors in the shelter production and improvement process are mobilized;

(b) The conditions for women and men to exercise their individual rights and responsibilities equally and to engage their abilities effectively in activities that will improve and sustain their living environments;

(c) The conditions for organizations and institutions to interact and network, building partnerships for [sustained economic growth and sustainable development;]

(d) The conditions for self-improvement by all;

(e) The conditions for enhancing international cooperation.